

# LORD ROSEBERY ON A PARNELLITE ALLIANCE.

Speaking at Paisley on the 15th of October, 1885, Lord Rosebery said in connection with the alleged alliance between the Tories and Parnellites.

THE engagement has been only sealed so far ; it has not been ratified. We shall have to pay for the ratification. The followers of Mr. Parnell do not give votes for nothing. I fear the result will be disastrous. I don't profess to be a very imaginative person, but I confess that my imagination fails to lead me to what the practical result of that alliance may be. Well, try and imagine to yourselves the future of this country governed by Mr. Parnell and Lord Randolph Churchill—(ironical laughter)—on the principle which Prince Bismarck calls *do ut des*—"give that you may give"—on the principle of "scratch me and I will scratch you." (Laughter.) We know the freedom from prejudice, to call it by no stronger expression, of the Tory party. We know the friendly feeling of Mr. Parnell towards this country, and we may be certain that it is not England, or Scotland, or Wales that will benefit by this new and interesting alliance. (Cheers.) Now, that is a grave prospect that the electors should weigh. I have no right to say anything about elections, but if I were an elector my whole object would be to sink all minor differences, and to take care that that alliance should be fruitless. (Cheers.) Now, if the Tory Government remains, and it can remain if you give it enough of votes, with the eighty or ninety followers of Mr. Parnell, to hold its own—if that Government remains, the future of the next House of Commons will rest, not with Lord Salisbury or with Lord Randolph Churchill, but with Mr. Parnell. He, and not Lord Salisbury, will be the master of the situation. He, and not Sir Michael Hicks Beach, will be the leader of the House of Commons. He will sit enthroned, with Lord Randolph Churchill on his right, and Sir Michael Hicks Beach on his left—(laughter)—like chiefs in Israel—(renewed laughter)—with eighty Parnellite members behind them who have signed the blind pledge of his followers, and the Tory members will mix with these eighty Parnellites, who have had to swallow a pledge, much as in the old days of Ireland, when the process-server came to serve the writ, the bailiff was made to swallow it. (Laughter.) Though it has its comic side, I think this prospect is a tragic one, because it may lead to a gloomy and terrible reaction, and what we always have to fear in politics is reaction. But I go further, and I say that this alliance of the Tory and the Irish vote is a new and very dangerous feature in our politics. You may say it is a stale charge to bring. Well, I would reiterate it till it is staler still, because it is an alliance which has not merely struck a mortal stab at political principles, but it involves a danger to the Empire itself. I have said that there are two features in this new alliance. I have stated one—that is the alliance of the Conservative and the Parnellite Party. I will now state the other new feature, and it is this—Mr. Parnell has formulated his demands and has stated what

he wants. I think no one who has studied politics can fail to appreciate the great merits of Mr. Parnell's political character. He has great force of character ; he has an enormous power of condensed and significant speech ; and, above all, he knows what he wants. We know from his last speeches something of what he wants ; not all because I think if we granted all that he asks now we should find that there was a postscript. (Laughter and cheers.) *What he wants now is an Irish Parliament with power to impose Protective duties.* Now, I am not the least afraid of the Protective duties, and I will let you know why—because Protective duties could only end in a measure of retaliation which would shut the Irish out from their only markets, and which would make them remove their own Protective duties. (Cheers.) I am not the least apprehensive about the Protective duties, but *what is proposed is this, as I understand it—that Ireland should be treated as a colony, and that the Crown should be the only link between Ireland and the mother country.* Well, it is so with the colonies, and Mr. Parnell wishes Ireland to be treated as a colony. But there is one great and essential difference between Ireland and our colonies, and it is this—that *the colonies are loyal, and Ireland, I greatly fear, is not.* (Cheers.) I wish I could believe it, but I cannot.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I think that in speaking of Ireland and Irish affairs we are apt to touch too much on the Irish vote. I think the Irish vote should no longer be a factor in the British Parliament, and for this reason, that there is no reliance to be placed upon it. *The Irish vote is not guided by consideration of what is best for Great Britain and for the Empire.* (Cheers.)

It seems to me that in considering this question, we have gained something if we have made up our minds that we are no longer to regard the Irish Parliamentary vote—(cheers)—and it seems to me if we come to that conclusion we have gained something more, because we have gained a perception of the only right policy to be pursued towards Ireland. *I am afraid there is only one policy to be pursued towards Ireland, and it is this—to treat Ireland exactly, so far as may be, as you would treat any other part of the United Kingdom, whenever you can do it, without regard to the language of menace or insult, or language of opprobrium from those you are trying to benefit. Whenever you can do it, try and treat Ireland exactly as you would treat Scotland or Wales.* (Cheers.) *If you pass a measure of local government for Great Britain, pass as near as may be exactly the same measure of local government for Ireland.* (Cheers.) She will not thank you ; she will receive your measure rather with a curse than with a blessing ; but what I want to point out is, that it is unworthy of British statesmen, who know so much of Irish affairs, to heed any longer the reception which may be given by the leaders of public opinion in Ireland. (Cheers.)—*Scotsman*, 16th October, 1885.